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Minister Clement, Governor Schwarzenegger Join Forces to Fight Cancer Through Cancer Stem Cell Research

SAN DIEGO, Calif., June 18, 2008— Canada and California, two world leaders in the area of cancer stem cell research, will join forces to gain a better understanding of the role cancer stem cells play in the development of the disease.

“This is an historic agreement. Canadian researchers have been at the forefront on stem cell research. Now we are working together across borders, bringing together the best minds from both countries with the goal of learning how to prevent and treat cancer for the benefit of all of our citizens,” said Tony Clement, Minister of Health. “I am proud to announce Canada will contribute more than $100 million to the Cancer Stem Cell Consortium (CSCC), which will work with the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) in this exciting new partnership.”

“California is committed to being a leader in stem cell research, but no one state or nation should do this alone" stated Governor Schwarzenegger. "Entering into collaborations such as this, which bring together leading medical research capabilities, have great potential in improving the lives of not only Californians, but people around the world.”

The three-year agreement lays the foundation for CIRM and CSCC to explore collaborative approaches to evaluate, fund and monitor cancer stem cell research projects.

The announcement was made at the BIO 2008 International Convention in San Diego, California by Canadian Health Minister Tony Clement, Dr. Alan Trounson, President of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM), Robert N. Klein, Chairman of the Governing Board of CIRM and Dr. Martin Godbout, CEO of Genome Canada and Chairman of the Board of the Cancer Stem Cell Consortium.

The first potential area for collaboration under consideration is the upcoming CIRM Disease Team grants. These grants will provide an opportunity for researchers in California and Canada to collaborate, broadening the potential pool of expertise that can be applied toward research in a specific area.

The Disease Team Awards will support multi-disciplinary teams of scientists in pursuit of therapies for specific diseases. The goal is to fund the work of disease teams that would result in therapy or diagnostics for a particular disease or serious injury. Request for Applications (RFA) for these grants will be issued by CIRM in October with grants announced in June 2009. Successful proposals will likely include a description of a path to an Investigational New Drug filing at the end of the four-to-five year grant.

“One of CIRM’s primary goals is to accelerate the field of stem cell research as a whole. In some instances we can do this more effectively through collaborations that involve the best scientific endeavors, regardless of geography” said Dr. Alan Trounson, President of CIRM. “Through this relationship, CIRM money will continue to be earmarked only for research that takes place within California, but our funding can be significantly leveraged to accelerate the clinical benefits for patients. Coordinating our joint efforts in cancer stem cell research through collaborative programs with our colleagues in Canada will enhance the opportunities to contain and to prevent recurrence of certain cancers.”

“We are excited about the opportunities presented by this international collaboration with our Canadian colleagues,“ stated Robert N. Klein, Chairman of the Governing Board of CIRM, the state stem cell agency.“ Coordinating scientific efforts should shorten the time that it takes to drive discoveries into the clinic and to patients. We hope to enter into several agreements with other

nations to significantly expand this vital stem cell research and extend our ability to accelerate the field."

"Cancer stem cells have recently been a focus of much research as a possible cause of cancer recurrence and many of the most important discoveries linking cancer stem cells to cancer have been made by Canadian and Californian researchers. An international collaboration involving Canada and California, with a focus on cancer stem cells, can be expected to raise research in this field to a much higher level." said Dr. Jim Till, the President of the CSCC. "International coordination and collaboration should ensure that Canadian funds will be used to support Canadian research of the very highest quality."

The Canadian partners in CSCC (Canada Foundation for Innovation, Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Stem Cell Network, Ontario Institute for Cancer Research and Genome Canada) are expected to make an initial investment of more than $100 million Canadian dollars in the collaboration, with Genome Canada, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Ontario Government through the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research, having already confirmed commitments of up to $30 million each for cancer stem cell research. CIRM will support the collaboration through its existing programs.
No funds awarded through this collaboration will be used for research involving human reproductive cloning or any other matter that is prohibited by California law or CIRM regulations for CIRM grantees or Canadian law or CSCC's Members' regulations for CSCC grantees.

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BACKGROUNDER

About CIRM CIRM was established in 2005 with the passage of Proposition 71, the California Stem Cell Research and Cures Act. The statewide ballot measure, which provided $3 billion in funding for stem cell research at California universities and research institutions, was overwhelmingly approved by voters, and called for the establishment of an entity to make grants and provide loans for stem cell research, research facilities, and other vital research opportunities. To date, the CIRM governing board has approved 168 research and facility grants totaling more than $530 million, making CIRM the largest source of funding for human pluripotent, progenitor and cancer stem cell research in the world. For more information, please visit www.cirm.ca.gov.

About the Cancer Stem Cell Consortium The Cancer Stem Cell Consortium is a not-for-corporation that was incorporated in 2007 as a result of a project initiated by a stem cell and regenerative medicine working group of the Canada-California Strategic Innovation Partnership, a unique collaboration between California and Canada stakeholders from universities, private sector and government. CSCC's objectives are to coordinate an international strategy for cancer stem cell research and translational activities to allow the biomedical community to move quickly and effectively from discoveries to application in the clinic; establish partnerships among organizations from Canada, California and other jurisdictions to accelerate and synergize research and translation opportunities related to cancer stem cells; and secure investments from governments, private foundations and the private sector for sustained and stable research funding. Consortium members currently include: Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), Genome Canada, Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), Ontario Institute for Cancer Research (OICR) and the Stem Cell Network.

The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) is the Government of Canada's agency for health research. CIHR's mission is to create new scientific knowledge and to catalyze its translation into improved health, more effective health services and products, and a strengthened Canadian health care system. Composed of 13 Institutes, CIHR provides leadership and support to more than 11,000 health researchers and trainees across Canada.

The Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) is an independent corporation created by the Government of Canada to fund research infrastructure. The CFI's mandate is to strengthen the capacity of Canadian universities, colleges, research hospitals, and non-profit research institutions to carry out world-class research and technology development that benefits Canadians. Since its creation in 1997, the CFI has committed $3.8 billion in support of 5,714 projects at 128 research institutions in 64 municipalities across Canada.

Genome Canada is a private, not-for-profit corporation, and the primary funding and information resource relating to genomics and proteomics research in Canada. Its principal goal is to position Canada among the world leaders in genomics and proteomics research. Its mandate is to develop and implement a national strategy in genomics and proteomics research for the benefit of all Canadians in key selected areas such as agriculture, environment, fisheries, forestry, animal and human health, and new technology. For this purpose, it has received $840 million in funding from the Canadian government and co-funding from other partners over seven years, allowing it to invest a total of $1.6 billion in 131 innovative research projects and technology platforms.

The Ontario Institute for Cancer Research is a centre of excellence, moving Ontario to the forefront of discovery and innovation. It is dedicated to research in prevention, early detection, diagnosis, treatment and control of cancer. OICR is a not-for-profit corporation funded by the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Research and Innovation.

The **Stem Cell Network** brings together more than 70 of Canada's leading scientists, clinicians, engineers and ethicists, to catalyze the translation of stem cell research into clinical applications, commercial products, and public policy. It is one of 18 Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE), Canada's flagship science and technology program. The NCE program is administered and funded by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council in partnership with Industry Canada.